



April 24, 1986

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PRAYERS, ACTION RECALL

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VICTIMS OF SOWETO

NEW YORK (DPS, April 24) -- The Episcopal Church will join Churches throughout the world in a Day of Prayer and Fasting for South Africa on June 16, the tenth anniversary of the massacre in the black South African township of Soweto in which nearly 700 people died at the hands of South African police.

The idea for the day was proposed at last December's meeting of world church leaders on South Africa, in Harare, Zimbabwe. It was endorsed by the executive committee of the World Council of Churches at its meeting last month in Kinshasha, Zaire.

The Episcopal Church response is being coordinated through the Public Policy Network from the Episcopal Church Center here. Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning and Network coordinator Nancy Deppen are suggesting that Episcopalians take part not only in the variety of

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planned memorial services but that they also use the occasion to be in touch with congressional representatives to press Church opposition to apartheid.

Marking the occasion, South African Council of Churches General Secretary Beyers Naude issued a "call to Christians of the world church," urging their prayer that "the present unjust rule of apartheid be brought to an end, that apartheid and racism in all its forms in all countries of the world be removed and destroyed."

He called apartheid "evil, inhuman and destructive to humankind." He called for prayer "that God may destroy this evil system, and a just, non-racial, democratic and participatory society may emerge." He also asked that people "bring to God in prayer all those who have died in their courageous resistance to apartheid, all those who have been wounded, detained, tortured, banned or driven into exile in their valiant and determined opposition to this vile system."

Further, he asked prayers that those responsible for or benefiting from apartheid would "openly repent of their attitudes and actions, including those of compliance and sinful compromise."

Resource materials for the services and other actions are being mailed to Network members. Church members are being asked to visit local congressional offices on June 14 and plan to take part in special commemorative church services on June 15. A national ecumenical service will be held June 16 in Washington, and June 17 is set aside as a Day of Witness on Capitol Hill. Resource material and other information is available from the Public Policy Network, the Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Ave., New York, NY 10017. The materials include a poster, texts of prayers and liturgies and background papers.

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WCC's CASTRO AND POPE

MEET, TALK IN ROME

DPS 86086

ROME (DPS, April 24) --- General Secretary Emilio Castro of the World Council of Churches met Pope John Paul II here, April 14. It was Castro's first visit to the Vatican since he assumed his current post in January 1985.

In connection with the visit, the WCC and the Vatican issued a summary of the six questions the two discussed:

(a) The search for unity is a principal pastoral concern of the Roman Catholic Church and is a primary responsibility of the World Council of Churches. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC and its member churches have committed themselves to work for the visible unity of Christians. This is expressed, for instance, in the full Roman Catholic collaboration in the work of the Faith and Order Commission and is evident in the theological convergences traced in the document on baptism, eucharist and ministry. Like the member churches of the WCC, the Roman Catholic Church is giving an official response to the document, and Roman Catholic theologians are participating fully in other important Faith and Order works, such as the study "towards the expression of the apostolic faith" and "the way the church teaches authoritatively today." There will also be Roman Catholic participation in forthcoming WCC conferences on unity and mission.

(b) Peace is increasingly a concern for Christians around the world. Since 1986 has been designated by the United Nations as the International Year for Peace, there is an opportunity for churches to pray and work together for peace. It is in this context that the initiative for peace of Pope John Paul II has been proposed. The WCC has welcomed and endorsed this initiative of the Pope and encouraged its

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member churches to participate. The WCC is prepared to collaborate in elaborating plans for the day of peace at Assisi, Italy on Oct. 27 and will be fully represented at it. The WCC is promoting a Day of Prayer for Peace in Southern Africa on June 16, which will underline the inter-connection of peace and justice and in which member churches of the WCC and other churches are invited to take part. As churches and ecumenical bodies attempt to engage in the concerted and sustained efforts required to promote peace, they can find encouragement and support in the initiatives sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches.

(c) Both the Roman Catholic Church and the member churches of the WCC reject racism and its expression in apartheid as incompatible with the Gospel. Explorations are going on of the biblical, theological and pastoral reasons underlying this common rejection of discrimination against fellow human beings. Ways are being sought of enabling Roman Catholics and other Christians to give a common witness in maintaining that human beings are in the image of God, in upholding human dignity and in standing against the evils of racism and apartheid.

(d) The continuation and development of the ecumenical movement calls for new efforts in ecumenical formation, especially of clergy and those with pastoral responsibility. In the past decade, this has been taken somewhat for granted. It is necessary that those in leadership, teaching and pastoral positions in the churches be convinced of the urgency of the search for unity and be aware of the principles of ecumenism and of what God is doing in the ecumenical movement. The concern for adequate ecumenical formation is so crucial to the ecumenical movement that it will continue to be a priority in the collaboration between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC.

(e) Serious joint theological work is doing much to face up to the problems which still separate Christians and which hinder them from confessing the faith together. There is increasing awareness of the communion between Christians, based on faith in Christ and baptism, and which makes possible a common witness to the Gospel. The present

situation of human society makes this common witness most urgent. It is hoped that the present meeting of Dr. Emilio Castro and the Holy Father may be a symbol of such common witness and an incentive towards it.

(f) The Joint Working Group between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church has an importance that is both practical and highly symbolic. It searches out promising areas of study and investigation in the search for unity, it promotes dialogue and facilitates collaboration. Its work as an instrument for sustaining and promoting the relationships between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church calls for further interest and support.

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APARTHEID FILM

HONORED IN SERIES

DPS 86087

NEW YORK (DPS, April 24) -- An anti-apartheid film that was partially sponsored by the Episcopal Church was honored recently by inclusion in the New York New Directors/New Films series. The series, sponsored by the Film Society of Lincoln Center and Department of Film of the Museum of Modern Art, is an annual showcase of innovative and important filmmaking.

The film "Witness to Apartheid" was conceived and directed by Sharon I. Sopher and Kevin Harris and partly funded through the Communication and Public Issues offices of the Episcopal Church Center with the South Africa Council of Churches. It features Bishop Desmond Tutu and a broad segment of South Africans of all races.

Because of the New Directors honor, the film has already been booked into New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles theaters and will also be shown by both the Public Broadcasting System and British Broadcasting. Screenings have won praise from a variety of African diplomats.

Writing in the New York Times, critic Walter Goodman said of the film:

"The subject of 'Witness to Apartheid,' directed by Sharon I. Sopher and Kevin Harris, is the brutal police treatment of protesters in South Africa's black townships. Nothing here is likely to surprise any newspaper reader, but, as the authorities have learned to their annoyance, the camera is no friend to a violence-prone regime. The scars of apartheid, real scars, are presented most graphically.

"Interviews with whites reveal a range of attitudes from ferocity (one woman looks forward to a massacre of blacks) to shame, guilt and alliance with blacks. Many whites prefer to look the other way. But that, the movie demonstrates, is becoming ever more difficult, as militancy builds among young blacks.

"The record laid out powerfully here is of heightened protests and tougher crackdowns. No one expresses much hope for reconciliation or accommodation. It is difficult to disagree with Bishop Desmond Tutu, who is interviewed at length, that the future looks bleak for anything but more of the same, and worse."

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PROVINCES SPONSOR YOUTH

SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS

DPS 86088

NEW YORK (DPS, April 24) -- "To a large degree, the Church doesn't think of social action ministry for kids" but that's changing, according to Bobbie Bevill, youth ministries coordinator at the Episcopal Church Center. The change is coming through a series of provincial youth social action projects now in process in the eight domestic provinces of the Episcopal Church.

The program had its origins in requests from youth and their leaders who wanted a way to "do something nice for someone." A September 1984 meeting of a youth ministries' national social action design team made up of one adult layperson, one youth and one clergy representative from each of the domestic provinces drew up a purpose statement which reads: "Our purpose is to create a framework for ongoing Christian social action programs which provide tangible ways to express how much we care about the people of the world." The design team now meets annually.

Last year, there were youth social action programs in Provinces VI, VII and VIII, but this year, all eight provinces have programs. Among them are the following:

The Province I project is called "FaithWorks 86" and will run from June 28-July 10. The time will be divided between inner-city Bridgeport, Conn. and a mountain-top farm near West Rupert, Vt. The building of Christian community among participants, ages 15-19, is a major purpose of the program, whose bilingual brochure also states, "This community of young people will minister at each location by helping existing social action programs or by undertaking special social action projects as suggested by the local community. An opportunity will be offered for on-going reflection during the two-week program, as participants move from talking about our Christian ideals to acting on these beliefs." The action will include housing rehabilitation; visiting those in prisons, hospitals and nursing homes; tutoring; work in soup kitchen and food distribution programs; work on a dairy farm; clearing wooded paths; and light construction work.

Province III has set up its youth social action program for work in Panama. Organizer Betty L. Creamer of the Diocese of

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Pennsylvania has visited Panama and talked with Bishop James Ottley and Glenda McQueen, who is responsible for youth ministry there, in order to insure that participants not only get exposure to a different culture but also contribute -- do something the diocese really needs. As a result, participants in the July 25-Aug. 8 program will begin with an orientation day in Panama City, then go to Santa Clara on the Pacific Coast to replace the roof on a diocesan conference center there. From Santa Clara, they return to the capital, then move on to Bocas Del Toro, an island in the Caribbean, where they will stay with local families and do repairs on the Church of Santa Maria. A day off in Panama City precedes their return to the United States. Creamer already has more applications than she has available places.

Province V is planning two projects this year, one urban, one rural. According to their brochure, "the areas to be served in 1986 have been selected by a 'bidding' process, through which the community was asked to identify areas of local need, and to demonstrate ways in which the local community would be involved and benefit in the long term by the particular project." The June 21-28 rural project is located in the Diocese of Quincy, in Pike County, Ill., an area with a substantial elderly population and which has been hard hit by unemployment and the agricultural crisis. The urban project will be at St. Peter's Church, in one of the most economically depressed areas of Detroit, Aug. 2-9. St. Peter's, whose congregation includes street people, Jamaicans, Native Americans, university students and staff, suburbanites and a group of the Mar Thoma Church from India, runs one of the largest soup kitchens in Detroit and is the base for a cooperative renovation service for low income families in the surrounding neighborhood. Participants in both projects will be working not only to help individuals but to raise the pride of the respective communities and to raise their own consciousness of those communities' needs.

Funds for the annual national meeting of the design team and some seed money have come from the Office for Ministry Development at the Episcopal Church Center. The rest of the work is done on the provincial level. Bevill calls the projects "really a cooperative effort between us and the provinces," and adds, "We're excited about it."

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PICTURE CAPTION

Presiding Bishop Recommends

Lay Ministry Resource

(86089) The Most Rev. Edmond L. Browning, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, has commended a new resource and study guide published by the Alban Institute: Lay Voices in an Open Church by Celia Allison Hahn. "I welcome Lay Voices in an Open Church and its study guide as a new resource for supporting the ministry of the laity. Many clergy and laity are engaged in programs to support, affirm and authenticate the ministry of the laity in the world. I hope all parishes will use this resource as a way of moving toward the vision of a totally ministering Church." The thesis of this resource is "We laity carry out our primary callings in many wordly settings. Our churches' primary task is to equip us for ministries which lie beyond their walls, and the congregations that carry out that equipping job will be those that are willing to take the world beyond the walls seriously." In a study guide for Lay Voices in an Open Church, Jean M. Haldane, chair of the Total Ministry Task Force, offers a six-session course designed to assist laity in (1) making responsible choices about their church belonging and (2) helping the Church be for them what they need it to be, so that they can be God's people ministering in God's world. There are complete step-by-step instructions, teaching hints and Bible study ideas for lay facilitators to use with Lay Voices in an Open Church. Lay Voices in an Open Church and the study guide may be ordered from the Alban Institute, 4125 Nebraska Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20016.

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BISHOP THOMAS

DIES AT 84

DPS 86090

PITTSBURGH (DPS, April 24) -- The Rt. Rev. William S. Thomas, Jr., who served as suffragan bishop of the Episcopal diocese here for 18 years, died on April 19 at the age of 84.

A native of Pittsburgh, Thomas was the son of William S. Thomas, Sr. and Lillian Amelia Evans.

Thomas began his higher education at Washington and Jefferson College in Pennsylvania, where he spent 1921-22, going on to the University of Pittsburgh, from which he received a BA in 1924. He then attended the Episcopal Theological School, in Cambridge, Mass. 1924-25. He also received DD degrees from both the University of Pittsburgh and the Philadelphia Divinity School.

Bishop Alexander Mann of Pittsburgh ordained Thomas to the diaconate in December 1926 and to the priesthood in July 1927.

Thomas served as assistant at Calvary Church, Pittsburgh, 1936-40. He then was made canon of St. Paul's Cathedral in Boston, where he served 1940-42. He returned to Pittsburgh in 1942 to become its archdeacon, a position he held until the time of his election as suffragan bishop of Pittsburgh in 1953.

As suffragan, Thomas served under diocesan bishops Austin Pardue (1944-68) and Robert B. Appleyard (1968-82). He retired in 1971 but continued to live here.

In 1921, Thomas married Janet Alice Clutter. They had two children.

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CHURCH NEWS BRIEFS

DPS 86091

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. (DPS, April 24) -- The Rt. Rev. Bennett J. Sims, retired bishop of Atlanta, and the Very Rev. David B. Collins, president of the House of Deputies, were keynoter and chaplain, respectively, of the 18th annual Conference of Diocesan Executives (C.O.D.E.), here April 7-11. More than 120 members, spouses and guests, representing 56 domestic dioceses of the Episcopal Church and seven Canadian dioceses, heard Sims and Collins daily address the 1986 theme: "Theology and Mission of Servant Leadership." Other sessions included workshops, worship and resource-sharing among members and with program executives from the Episcopal Church Center in New York. At the business meeting April 10, members received reports, ratified official incorporation of C.O.D.E. and elected representatives to the Board of Directors. For the first time, the C.O.D.E. board is headed by a Canadian representative, the Rev. Charles F. Wilkins, Diocese of Kootenay. Other members are: Mary Lou Lavallee, Diocese of Western Massachusetts, vice president; Evelyn Haygood, Diocese of Dallas, treasurer; Vincent Currie, Jr., of Central Gulf Coast, secretary; the Rev. Charles L. Johnson, Diocese of Virginia, program chairman; and the Ven. Robert Herlocker of Idaho, site chairman. All full-time diocesan executives reporting directly to bishops are eligible for membership.

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (DPS, April 24) -- Under the leadership of the Rt. Rev. John T. Walker, bishop of Washington, the Standing Commission on Peace met at Virginia Theological Seminary here April 1-2. The Commission was created by the 1985 General Convention. Officers for the triennium were elected as follows: the Rev. Nathaniel Pierce, Diocese of Massachusetts, chairman; Lawrence S. Poston, Diocese of Chicago, vice chairman; Lee Davis Thames, Diocese of Mississippi, secretary. Thelma Wilson of the Diocese of Nicaragua is a member of the Commission and invited the group to hold one of its meetings in Managua. A meeting was tentatively scheduled there for March 2-6, 1987, to take advantage of previously scheduled trips by two members of the Commission. Other business included reviewing the many resolutions passed by the 1985 General Convention involving peace-related issues. The first

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and second report of the Joint Commission on Peace were also reviewed. The next meeting of the Commission will be held Nov. 3-5 in Houston, Texas.

NEW YORK (DPS, April 24) -- This year's annual Lesser Chapter of the Brotherhood of St. Gregory was held here from March 7-9, bringing together brothers from around the country. Saturday, the 8th, was spent at the Church of St. Luke in the Fields, and the rites of the Brotherhood, whose Superior General is Richard Thomas Biernacki, took place during the Offices and Eucharist of the day. At Morning Prayer, three postulants were received into the novitiate: Matthew Staples, Randal Anthony Elliott and George Keith; and Michael David Elvestrom was admitted to the postulancy of the community. At the Noonday Office, the following brothers renewed their annual vows of profession: Thomas Joseph Ross, Tobias Stanislas Haller, Thaddeus David Williams, Augustine James Baird, Edward Munro and Bernard Fessenden. The main service of the convocation was that afternoon: a votive Eucharist of St. Gregory the Great with the first profession of vows of Brothers John Francis Jones and Earl Christian. A special surprise guest for this service was the Most Rev. Edmond L. Browning, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. Following the service, a reception was held for the newly professed brothers at the Episcopal Church Center, where Browning was also honored with a surprise birthday celebration.

HELENA, Mont. (DPS, April 24) -- This January, in his first letter in The Episcopal Evangel, the diocesan newspaper, to the people of the Diocese of Montana, Bishop-elect C.I. Jones wrote of his and his family's settling into their new home and of their happiness there but added, "In terms of position descriptions, there is no such thing as a 'bishop-elect.' Since I am no longer Archdeacon of Kentucky and am not yet Bishop of Montana, I am having an identity crisis!" In early February, the diocesan council remedied his problem -- sort of -- by adopting for him the title, "Bishop in Limbo."

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